REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12-14 and 16-22 are pending. Claims 1, 5, 9, 12 and 20-22 are the independent claims.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 1-10 and 20-22 are allowed. Applicant also points out that although dependent claims 16-18 were indicated in the Office Action as being rejected over prior art, those claims should have been allowed at least because they each depend on an allowed claim. Thus, Applicant will assume that the presently allowed claims actually are claims 1-10, 16-18 and 20-22.

Claims 12-14 and 19[1] were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over U.S. Patent 5,694,425 (Suganuma et al.). Applicant submits that the independent claim 12 is patentable over the cited art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 12 recites, inter alia, judging whether the first code string is an audio signal or a non-audio signal based on at least one of the header and the payload of the undecoded first code string, decoding the first code string based on the judgment, and then encoding the code string according to an encoding method into the second code string.

Suganuma et al. teaches a digital network system which comprises an audio signal decoding device (206 in Fig. 2; 16 in Fig. 3) and an audio signal compressing and encoding device (207 in Fig. 2; 17 in Fig. 3). For purposes of brevity, the following explanation is made with reference to the digital network system illustrated in Fig. 2. In

[1] Claims 16-18 were also indicated as being rejected, but actually should be allowed as depending on allowed base claims.

that figure, the audio signal decoding device 206 includes a decoder 210, a pseudo PCM signal generator 211, an operation mode change switch 212, and a bit pattern adder 213.

The decoder 210 receives an input audio signal (an input speech signal) and converts a digital audio signal of a given code into an original PCM audio signal (a true PCM audio signal) when the input audio signal agrees with the digital audio signal of the given code. The decoder 210 outputs the true PCM audio signal to the operation mode change switch (column 5, lines 45 to 52). On the other hand, the pseudo PCM signal generator 211 outputs a pseudo PCM signal to the operation mode change switch 212. The operation mode change switch 212 selects the true PCM audio signal or the pseudo PCM signal and transmits the selected signal to the bit pattern adder 213 (column 5, lines 57 to 61). The pseudo PCM signal generator 211 adds meaningless data to the digital audio signal of the given code into the pseudo PCM signal without an effective decoding process (column 5, lines 53 to 56).

The bit pattern adder 213 interposes or adds bits of a given pattern into the digital signal selected by the operation mode change switch 212 (column 5, lines 61 to 63). That is, the given pattern or a predetermined bit pattern is embedded into the selected digital signal and is detected by a bit pattern detector 217 of the encoder device 207.

Specifically, the bit pattern detector 217 in the audio signal compressing and encoding device 207 decides whether or not the received digital signal contains the given-pattern bits and generates a switch control signal to both the operation mode change switches 212 and 216 (column 6, lines 36 to 44). When the bit pattern detector 217 detects that the received digital signal contains or embeds the given pattern bits, the operation mode change switch 212 selects the output signal of the pseudo PCM signal generator 211

(column 6, lines 44 to 48). On the other hand, when the bit pattern detector 217 detects that the received digital signal does not contain the given-pattern bits, the operation mode change switch 212 selects the output signal of the decoder 210 (column 6, lines 50 to 53).

From this fact, it can be seen that the selecting or switching operation is carried out in Suganuma et al. by detecting whether the given-pattern bits are present or absent, so as to switch a processing operation in a transmission apparatus. It is also noted in this regard that the given-pattern bits are produced within the transmission apparatus itself and are never included in a signal that is transmitted by the transmission apparatus and received as an input signal.

That is, Suganuma does not teach judging any code included in the input signal which is to be transmitted by the transmission apparatus. In any event, Applicant has found no teaching in Suganuma of judging an attribute of the input code to the transmission apparatus, namely, judging whether the input code is an audio signal or a non-audio signal.

In contrast to Suganuma, the code conversion method of claim 12 judges whether the first code string (a code to be converted by the code conversion method, e.g., an input signal) is an audio signal or a non-audio signal on the basis of information which is included in the input signal, namely, at least one of a header and a payload of the undecoded first code string. This feature is not disclosed in Suganuma et al., for at least the reasons set forth above. Therefore, Suganuma et al. does not anticipate claim 12.

Claims 13, 14 and 19 are each dependent from independent claim 12 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the

individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

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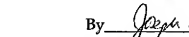
Respectfully submitted,

By 
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